

WASHINGTON TIMES
1 January 1987

Hill probe widens to Hasenfus ties

By Michael Hedges
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Congressional investigators have subpoenaed the records of two men closely linked to Eugene Hasenfus, the Wisconsin man who survived the crash of a plane delivering arms to the Nicaraguan resistance last October.

Shortly before it adjourned last week, the House Intelligence Committee subpoenaed Edward de Garay, the president of Corporate

Air Services, a Pennsylvania company, and William Langton, president of Southern Air Transport, a Miami-based airline.

Corporate Air Services was paying Mr. Hasenfus \$2,000 a month salary, and Southern Air Transport owned the C-123 in which Mr. Hasenfus was shot down over Nicaragua.

Although neither man testified before the 99th Congress adjourned, sources said subpoenas issued by the committee cover the records of both companies and will be valuable

in gathering information about the private network for supplying the anti-Sandinista rebels.

Meanwhile, Ernest Pleger, one of the attorneys representing Mr. Hasenfus, confirmed that his client will be interviewed for the first time Jan. 6 by agents from the FBI and the Miami branch of the U.S. Customs Service.

It was not clear why the committee subpoenas were not served until mid-December, when the House panel was close to adjourning. Special House and Senate select committees will begin their investigation into the Iran-Contra affair next week.

"They were probably after records, not people," said one high-

ranking Capitol Hill aide. "The House committee was trying to subpoena lots of documents to create a data base for the new committee."

The House committee in late December also issued subpoenas for several people connected with the arms sale to Iran, including retired Maj. Gen. Richard Secord and arms salesman Albert Hakim, according

to sources. Gen. Secord, who allegedly had a central role in arranging the arms deals, appeared before the Senate Intelligence Committee Dec. 9, but invoked his Fifth Amendment rights and refused to answer questions.

Subpoenas issued by the 99th Congress cannot compel an appearance before the new Congress which convenes Tuesday, according to congressional experts. But sources said the intelligence committee could use the writs to gather documents for

the Watergate-style special investigative committees which begin work next week.

Mr. Hasenfus, who was freed Dec. 17 by Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega after serving 73 days of a 30-year sentence for his role in aiding the rebel forces, has not been subpoenaed to testify before any congressional committees. But his attorney said they had agreed to make Mr. Hasenfus available when the special congressional panels begin work.

"He has said he will be available," said Barney Haynes, a lawyer working with former Attorney General Griffin Bell, who has been assisting in the defense of Mr. Hasenfus. "There would be no need to subpoena him."

Mr. Haynes said he was told that the Customs Service is investigating whether the arms aboard the ill-fated Hasenfus flight were originally shipped to Honduras from the United States — which could violate the Neutrality Act.

A spokesman for the Customs Service in Miami said he could not comment on the investigation, but added, "Our jurisdiction has to do with things illegally exported from or imported to the United States."

The House Intelligence Committee, sources said, was eager to unravel details about the private aid network that has been supplying the Nicaraguan resistance since U.S. military aid was prohibited by Congress in 1984. That information is expected to be turned over to the new special committees before Mr. Hasenfus is summoned to appear on Capitol Hill, sources said.

Mr. de Garay, the president of Corporate Air Services, was subpoenaed Dec. 15. He did not appear before the committee adjourned Dec. 23, but the records of Corporate Air Services could help the new committee untangle the money trail from Central America to Wisconsin, according to sources. The company was paying Mr. Hasenfus' salary into his account at a Wisconsin bank.

Mr. Langton, president of Southern Air Transport, was subpoenaed in December along with records detailing flights made by Southern Air employees. The firm has been tied to the private aid network that worked to boost the supply-short anti-Marxist rebels, according to sources.

Mr. Langton has also been subpoenaed to testify before a federal grand jury in Miami investigating allegations of arms sales to the Contras, according to federal law enforcement sources.

When asked who funded the C-123 flight in October, Mr. Bell said last month, "We have only been able to trace it as far as Mr. de Garay. As far as I know, he hasn't told anyone who he was working for."

Mr. de Garay, who has not returned numerous telephone calls, lives in a small town near Lancaster, Pa., and operates a rural airstrip and the privately held Corporate Air Services. The company has handled subcontracts for Southern Air Transport in the past, according to published accounts.